

ÎSÂVÂSYÔPANISHAD

WITH THE COMMENTARY

OF

SRÎ SANKARÂCHÂRYA

Translated into English

BY

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NOTE.

THE rendering into English of a Sanskrit work of this kind presents many difficulties, for the very moulds in which thoughts are shaped in the two languages are often different. But no pains have been spared to make the version given here, as far as possible, faithful to the original. The text followed is that of the Memorial Edition of the Works of Śrī Śaṅkarāchārya published by the Śrī Vāṇī Vilās Press, but two manuscripts have been throughout consulted and on them are based the few variations of reading mentioned in the foot-notes. The translation is preceded by a brief introduction which summarises the teaching of the Upanishad. Here and there have also been added notes taken from Ānandagiri, and in this form has been incorporated in the book all that is valuable or interesting in his *Tikā*. It is hoped that these aids will increase the usefulness of the translation.

M. H.

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INTRODUCTION.

The Îṣāvâsyôpanishad—so called from its initial words—forms the concluding chapter of the Samhitâ of the Suklayajurvêda. The name of Samhitôpanishad is also sometimes given to it, in order to distinguish it from the other Upanishads which generally find their place in the Brâhmaṇas. According to the commentary here translated, the eighteen verses of this Upanishad are to be understood as falling into four sections—

- (i) Verse 1, which teaches that those who understand the Self and are fit for realising it should give up all worldly desires and devote themselves exclusively to attaining final release;
- (ii) verse 2, which enjoins the performance of *karma* on such others as do not comprehend the Self and are consequently unable to realise it;
- (iii) verses 3-8, which, having in view persons referred to in verse 1, describe the real nature of the Self and

indicate the consequences of realising or not realising it;

and (iv) verses 9-18, which commend the simultaneous practice of *karma* and *upāsana*, to persons referred to in verse 2.

In commenting on this Upanishad, Śrī Śaṅkarāchārya, now and again touches on the following point which is of much importance in understanding his view aright. The Veda inculcates, he says, two independent lines of conduct—one of *karma* or activity and the other of *jnāna* or withdrawal from the world. The first forms the subject-matter of the liturgical portion or the *karmakāṇḍa* and the second, of the Upanishads or the *jnānakāṇḍa*, of the Veda. The teaching of the *jnānakāṇḍa* is whole in itself, and should not be considered as subsidiary, in any way, to the teaching of the *karmakāṇḍa*. Nor should it be imagined that both these teachings can be concurrently followed by anybody, for there is a fundamental antithesis between them. The latter presupposes a belief in variety, as ordinarily experienced, while the former, denying all this variety, insists on the truth of only the unity underlying it. Thus the two paths of *karma* and *jnāna* are opposed to each other. Only we should remember that there is a sense in which the first may be looked

upon as subsidiary to the second, for when the path of activity is followed without any selfish desire for rewards, it serves as a preparation for the path of withdrawal by producing that composure of mind without which man cannot seek the highest truth. In this nobler sense *karma* is reckoned as an 'extrinsic' aid (*bahiranga*) to final release. But the 'intrinsic' aid (*antaranga*) is *jnāna*, and when a person once betakes himself to it, it logically follows that all *karma* loses its significance to him. As has been well put by the *Vārtikakāra*,

Satyantarangé vijnāné bahirangam na siddhyati
Samskārakam tu karma syāt jnānāttvajnānanin-
hutiḥ

Sambandha Vārtika 368.

ÎSÂVÂSYÓPANISHAD

WITH THE COMMENTARY

OF

SRÎ SANKARÂCHÂRYA.

The verses beginning with *Îśāvāsyam* are not utilised in ritual¹, since they explain the true

1. The doubt whether these verses are to be used in ritual arises because this Upanishad forms part of a *Samhitā* and the verses in the *Samhitā* portion of the Veda are generally so employed. If these verses are at all to be utilised in ritual there should be an express statement to that effect in the Veda or there should at least be an indirect guidance afforded by their contents. We find no such express statement, and the subject matter, so far from being connected with *karma*, is directly antagonistic to it. Further it is usual to classify whatever is subsidiary or supplementary to ritual in four ways as follows—that which is produced as e.g. a sacrificial cake which is newly made out of flour, that which is modified, as e.g. *soma* juice which is extracted from *soma* leaves, that which is acquired as e. g. a *mantra* which is learnt by rote before being used in ritual and, lastly, that which is purified, as e. g. unhusked rice which is utilised after being ceremonially sanctified. The Self cannot be brought under

nature of the Self which is not subsidiary to *karma*. The true nature of the Self, as will presently be indicated, is purity, taintlessness, oneness, permanence, bodilessness, omnipresence and so forth, which being inconsistent with *karma*, it is only right that these (verses) are not used in ritual. The Self whose essence is thus described, moreover, cannot be produced, modified, acquired or purified; nor is it of the character of an agent or an enjoyer; in which case it would be subsidiary to *karma*. (And its existence cannot be called in question) inasmuch as all the Upanishads purport only to unfold its nature. The Bhagavadgita and the Mōkshadharmā (in the Mahābhārata) have also the same aim.

any of these classes. It is neither an effect, nor a modification. It is not external to us to be obtained anew; nor is it impure to require any purification. The only other way of connecting the Self with *karma* is to make it an agent or an enjoyer. Neither of these, however, can the Self be, as will hereafter be explained in the commentary. Hence the denial of all relationship between the Self and *karma*.

2. Compare--

Samam Sarvēṣhu bhūtēṣhu tiṣṭhantam paramēṣvaram
Vināṣyatsvavināṣyantam yāḥ paśyati sa paśyati

—Bh: Gita xiii 27.

Eka ēva hi bhūtātma bhūtē bhūtē vyavasthitah.
Ekadhā bahudhā chaiva drisyaṭē jalachandravat.

Mahābhārata—Mokshadharmā.

(It has therefore to be presumed that) *karma* is prescribed taking (for granted) that, as recognised by the intelligence of the average man, plurality, agency, enjoyment and so forth, as also impurity and sinfulness, are of the Self. Those that know who are eligible (for ritual) state that *karma* is prescribed only for him who is desirous of its fruit—whether that fruit be visible (i.e. attainable in this life) as spiritual lustre or invisible (i.e. attainable only in another life) as *Svarga*—and thinks “I am a twice-born, free from blindness, dwarfishness and the like marks of disqualification”³. Therefore the following verses, removing this original nescience concerning the Self, from an explanation of its real nature, produce a knowledge of unity which is the means of eradicating sorrow, delusion and other similar features of mundane existence. We shall briefly comment on these verses, having thus indicated the persons entitled to study them, the subject-matter, aim and their inter-relation⁴.

3. Desire, which is either for attaining happiness or for avoiding misery necessarily implies nescience. For the Self being in reality bliss itself, untouched by sorrow, cannot by its nature, be affected by any desire. Similarly, believing that the Self is fit for performing *karma* because its bodily adjuncts with which it is empirically connected are fit for it is also an indication of nescience.

4. In the beginning of a commentary it is customary

1. In the Lord is to be veiled all this—whatsoever moves on earth. Through such renunciation do thou save (thyself); be not greedy, for whose is wealth?

He who rules is (termed) *Ît. Îsâ* (means), 'by the Lord'. The Lord is the Ruler and the real Self of every creature¹. By such a Lord, identical with oneself, is to be overspread i.e., covered. What? *idam sarvam*=(all this). *yat kincha*=whatsoever. *jagatyām*=on earth. *jagat*=all that (moves). By one's own Self,—the Lord, the supreme Self—which is the sole reality, all these unreal (things), both movable and immovable, have to be covered over, (perceiving) thus—'I am the

to point out specifically the qualifications of persons entitled to study the treatise, its subject-matter, the aim of its teaching and their inter-relation, especially that between the last two. Deficiency in respect of any of these which are termed the *Anubandhachatusṭayam* is understood to indicate the unworthiness of the treatise to be commented upon.

1. The difference between the controller and the controlled is not to be understood as real. It is merely apparent and is based on an illusion. In the same sense, we may, for example, say that a person standing before a number of mirrors controls the several reflected images of himself.

inner Self of all'.² Just as adventitious bad odour in a piece of sandal, arising from moisture, is overcome by true fragrance when the (sandal) piece is rubbed³, so indeed, will all the congenital variety of the world, such as being an agent or an enjoyer, superimposed on the Self, disappear at the perception (everywhere) of the (one) really existent Self. Since *jagatyām* is (here used) in an indicative sense, all kinds of effects differentiated as name, form and action (are to be understood as connoted by it). What a person, that is so full of the conception that the Lord is the Self of all, ought to do is to renounce the three-fold desire for offspring etc., and not (be engaged in) *karma*. In *tena tyaktena, tyakta* means renunciation (being used as an abstract noun). (It is not to be taken here as a past participle in the sense of 'given up' because) a son or a servant (for example) who has been abandoned or is dead, cannot save one since all connection is severed between them. Therefore (the word) can only mean 'renunciation'.

2. The sense is that one should realise that all is Self and that there is no variety in the Universe. This is the chief teaching of the present Upanishad and corresponds, in its significance, to the well-known *tattvamasi* of the Chândôgyôpanishad.

3. The object of this illustration is to suggest that when conviction regarding the unity of all existence does not spring directly from faith in the teaching, reasoning or enquiry will generally lead to it.

bhunjīthāh=do save⁴. Having thus renounced desires, be not greedy (*mā gridhah*) i. e., do not long for wealth. *kasya svit*=(of anybody). (The meaning is)—Do not long for the wealth of anybody—i. e., yourself or another. (In this interpretation) *svit* is a mere expletive. Or (we may say as follows)—Be not greedy. Why? (The answer is)—*kasya svit dhanam*=Whose is wealth?—implying a denial. If wealth *could* belong to anybody it might be sought; (but) everything having disappeared through the discovery of the Lord (everywhere), all this is of the Self, and all this is the Self. Thus it means—‘Do not seek an unreality.’⁵

Thus the purport of the text is that after renouncing the three-fold desire for offspring etc., the knower of Self should save himself by devotion to true knowledge. And to the rest who not being knowers of Self, are unable to realise it, the (next) verse states as follows—

4. This statement is not to be understood literally for the Self does not, in reality, require to be saved. It is only intended to extol renunciation by ascribing final release to its influence.

5. The third *pāda* of this verse enjoins renunciation on such as can discriminate between what is Self and what is not. Such withdrawal from the world is the only course for Self-realisation. By removing the ordinary distractions of life it renders easy the attainment of final release. The fourth *pāda* prescribes a rule of conduct and prohibits the acquisition by such persons of wealth of any description beyond what is necessary for bare maintenance.

2. Always performing *karma* here, one should desire to live, for a hundred years. So long as thou (seekest to live) a mere man, no other (path) exists (where) activity does not taint thee.

Kurvannêva=always performing. *iha*=(here) *karmāṇi*=rites such as *agnihôtra*. *jijivishêt*=one should desire to live. *ṣaṭam*=one hundred in number. *samāh*=years. For thus much is known to be the maximum age of man. Since (this is) a (mere) iteration (of an empirically known fact) what should be taken as enjoined (here) is that, if one should desire to live a hundred years, he should live only performing *karma*. *evam*=in this manner. *tvayi*=(in regard to you). *nare i.e.* when you live content to be a mere man. *itah i.e.*, from this present course of performing *karma* like *agnihôtra*. *anyathā*—a different course. *na asti*=does not exist; in which course evil action does not stain; *i.e.*, you do not get tainted by sin. Wherefore if one should desire for life (one should live) throughout performing *karma* such as *agnihôtra* prescribed by the *śāstra*.

How is it to be understood that the former

verse assigns to a *sannyāsin* devotion to knowledge and the latter, only devotion to *karma* to one incapable of it (Self-realisation) ? We reply—Do you not remember the aforesaid antithesis between *jñāna* and *karma* which remains unshakable as a mountain ? Here also the same has been expressly stated in verses 1 and 2,—(that he who seeks to live must perform *karma* and that he who does not, must give up all desire. The same conclusion may be arrived at) from the (following) directions to *sannyāsins*—“He should desire neither for life, nor for death ; he should enter a forest. This is the law.” “He should not thence return”. The difference in result between the two will also be pointed out later on. (Another statement of the like import is) “These two paths only appeared in the beginning—the path of activity and (the path) of withdrawal.” Of these two, renunciation is higher, cf. Taittirīya Âraṇyaka “Renunciation alone excelled”. And Vyāsa, the great Vedic teacher, after much reflection, taught his son definitely as follows—“The Vedas aim at inculcating these two paths—one termed the path of activity and the other, of renunciation.” We shall indicate (in the sequel) the distinction between these two (paths).

And now the (next) verse is begun in dispraise of the ignorant—

3. Malignant are those worlds and enveloped in blinding darkness, into which pass, after death, whatsoever people slay the Self.

From the standpoint of Unity in the form of the supreme Self, even *dēvas* are (reckoned) as *asuras*. *asuryāh*=belonging to demons. *nāma* is a mere expletive here. *te*=(those), *lokāh*=births (or lives), because therein the fruits of *karma* are perceived or enjoyed. *andhēna*=of blinding nature. *tamasā*=by nescience. *āvritāh*=enveloped. *tān*=(those) viz. existences down to the immovable, *prētya*=having left this body. *abhigachchanti*=(attain) according to their past deeds and according to their devotional practices. *yē kē cha*=whosoever. *ātmahanah*=those who slay the Self. Who are they? People that are ignorant¹. How can they slay the *eternal* Self? Through their failing of ignorance they veil (*i.e.* forget) the ever present Self. The sign of (a belief in) its existence is the consciousness of its undecaying immortal nature. This becomes veiled (*i.e.* forgotten), as if the Self has been slain, and the ordinary ignorant people are termed 'slayers of Self'². By reason of this sin of slaying the Self, they transmigrate.

1. I read "ke te? Ye janâ avidvâmsah".

2. Ascribing impurity etc. to the Self is considered as equivalent to killing it ; just as imputing a false and serious

Now is explained of what nature this Self is, by slaying which the ignorant transmigrate and, as distinguished from them, the learned, by not slaying it, attain final release—

4. Unmoving, one, (and yet) speedier than the mind : the senses reach it never; (for) it (Self) goes before. Standing, it outstrips others that run. In virtue of it, does *mâtariśvâ* allot functions (severally to all).

Anéjat=not shaking, from the root *éj* to shake. Shaking is moving, *i.e.*, lapsing from its real state. (The Self is) free from it, *i.e.*, is always of the same form. It is also *one* in all beings. *manasó javīyah*=speedier than the mind which is characterised by desire &c. Wherefore these conflicting statements—that it is at once assuredly motionless and speedier than the mind? This is not wrong, for it can be justified (on the basis of the Self) being conditioned or unconditioned. In its original unconditioned form it is stated to be unmoving and one. (It is also possible to charge against a virtuous man is, in ordinary parlance, spoken of as “murder without a weapon.”—*aṣāstravadha*

predicate motion of the Self) because it reflects (the features of) its conditioning mind which is the internal sense characterised by desire and doubt. Since the mind, though residing here within the body can, in an instant, conceive of the distant *Brahmalōka* and the like, it is ordinarily taken as possessing great speed. When such mind, for instance reaches (in thought) *Brahmalōka*, with rapidity, the Self appears to have reached there already. Therefore it is said here 'speedier than the mind'. *devāḥ*=senses such as the eye—so called because they illuminate. *ēnat*=this entity of the Self. *na āpnūvan*=did not reach, the mind being speedier than they. Since mental operation (always) intervenes, not even the semblance of the Self becomes perceivable by the Senses.¹ (And it is beyond the mind itself) because the Self is always in advance (of it) being all-pervading like space. (Now the verse) states that the Self, always² free from all features of transmigration, in its own unconditioned form and being altogether changeless, appears to the indiscriminating ignorant, as experiencing all the several modes of life due to limiting adjuncts and also as being many, *i.e.*, one in each body. *tat*=(that). *dhāvataḥ*=speedily

1. The action of the senses presupposes the operation of the mind. The Self being beyond mind, is necessarily beyond the senses as well.

2. I read *sarvadāpi* instead of *sarvavyāpi*.

going. *anyān.*=mind, the organs of speech &c., which are all other than the Self. *atyēti*=seems to outstrip. The text itself indicates the sense of *iva* (seems) by *tishthat* which means 'itself remaining immutable.' *tasmin* i.e. in virtue of the existence of the Self which is of the nature of eternal sentiency. *Mātariṣvā*=He who moves (*ṣvayati*) in the heavens (*mātari*); the Wind, the active principle in all creatures; on which are dependent all the aggregates of causes and effects and into which they are woven like warp and woof and which is also termed 'the connecting thread' and is the support of the whole universe. Such is *mātariṣvā*. *apah*=functions³ of things, such as flaming and burning of Fire, shining of the Sun, raining of the Cloud and so on. *dadhāti*=allots⁴; or the word may mean 'directs' agreeably to texts like "Through fear of Him the wind blows &c." (Tait: Up: II, viii, 1). The idea is that all changes of the nature of cause and effect take place only when the Self, the eternal sentiency and substrate of all, exists.

Not weary of repeating, the Veda states

3. *Apah* in a secondary sense means 'Sacrificial acts' for most of them are performed with water, ghee and such other liquids. Hence, in what may be called a 'tertiary sense' the term may be taken to denote all kinds of activity.

4. This implies an argument for the existence of an all-controlling Lord of the Universe.

once again what has already been said in the previous verse—

5. It moves : and it moves
not : it is far and it is near. It is
inside all this; it is also outside
all this.

Tad=the Self in question. *êjati*=moves. The same does not move (*na êjati*) i.e., in itself. In other words, being in truth motionless, it (only) appears to move. Moreover, *tat*=it, *dûre*=(at a distance). It is distant, as it were, because the ignorant cannot get at it even in a thousand million years. *tat u*=(it is also); *antikê*=near. Absolutely so, to the wise for it is their very Self. It is not merely far and near; it is (also) *antah* i.e. inside of all this. Compare—‘Which Self is inmost of all’—(Brih. Up. III, iv, 1). *asya sarvasya*=(of this all) i.e., the universe consisting of name, form and action. It is outside all this, being pervasive; inside, being supremely subtle like space. (We should also remember) that it is without interstices from the teaching contained in passages like “wholly solid sentiency &c.”—(Brih. Up.IV, v, 13)

6. And he who sees all beings
in himself and himself in all
beings has no aversion thence.

Yah tu i. e., a *sannyāsin* desiring final release. *sarvāṇi bhūtāni*= all beings (*i.e.*, existences) from *prakṛiti* down to the immovable. *ātmani eva anupaśyati*=(discovers in himself) *i. e.*, does not understand as other than his own Self. *sarva bhūtēṣu cha i.e.* and in the same (beings). *ātmānam* =(himself) *i. e.*, his own Self as the Self of all those beings as well. (The reference here is to him) who beholds himself, the same in all beings thus—‘Just as I, the cogniser of all notions, the perceiver, one and devoid of all attributes, am the Self of this my body, the aggregate of causes and effects, so also am I in the same form, the Self of all beings from *prakṛiti* down to the immovable. *tataḥ*=through such perception. *na vijugupsatē*=does not feel repelled. This is an iteration of what is (empirically) known. All aversion is from evil things other than one’s own self, and if one recognises (everywhere) only the Self, absolutely pure and continuous, it is clear that (for such an one) there is nothing to excite repulsion. Hence the statement—‘He has no aversion thence’.

Another verse also expresses the same idea—

7. When to a knower discovering unity, all beings become his very Self, what delusion then (to him) and what sorrow?

Yasmin=when or in which Self. *sarvāṇi bhūtāni*=the same (already mentioned) beings of all kinds. *ātma ēva abhūt*=became one's own self, through right perception. *viśānataḥ* = (to the knower) of Reality. *tatra*=then or in such Self. *kó móhaḥ kaṣṣokaḥ*=(what delusion and what sorrow?) Sorrow and delusion are for one that does not understand the source of desire and activity but not to one that realises the unity of Self, pure and resembling space. The third *pāda* by calling in question and denying the possibility of sorrow and delusion which are the result of nescience, indicates (so far as the knower is concerned) the absolute cessation of worldly existence together with its cause.

The following verse (now) states of what description the Self—spoken of in the foregoing verses—in its nature, is—

8. 'He (the self) is all pervading, bright, incorporeal, scatheless and veinless, pure, untouched by sin; a seer, all-knowing, superposed and self-begotten. (It is He that) has duly allotted to the eternal creators their (various) duties.

Saḥ=the aforesaid Self. *paryagāt*=went round; *i.e.* he is pervading like space. *śukram*=white, *i.e.* radiant, bright. *akāyam*=bodiless *i.e.* without the subtle body, *avranam*=not to be wounded. *snāva*=vein; therefore *asnāvīram* means 'veinless'. The last two (epithets) deny the gross body; *śuddham*=without the stain of nescience. This denies the causal body. *apāpavidham*=unsmitten by evil (which term is meant to include) both merits and demerits¹. The words beginning with *śukram* are to be changed to the masculine form, because the verse starts with *saḥ* (a masculine form) and ends likewise with *kaviḥ* and *manīshī* (which also are masculine in form). *kaviḥ*=seeing what is past², *i.e.* witness of all, according to the text—"There is no seer other than He" (Brih. Up. III, vii, 23), *manīshī*=the controller of the mind *i.e.*, the all-knowing Lord. *paribhūḥ* means 'who is above (*pari*=*upari*) everything'. *svayambhūḥ*=self-begotten. This signifies that what is above everything as well as what is everything are both

1. According to the view of Sankarâchârya, it should be remembered, good and evil become reduced to the same level in the eyes of a knower of the Self, for both alike lead to a succession of births, although the one be of a higher kind than the other.

2. This word literally means 'one that can see what is past'. Here it is to be understood in a secondary sense, the past indicatin all time—the present as well as the future. Hence it means "witness of all".

the Self. Such a Lord, always free, being all-knowing, has allotted duties (*arthān*) according to past deeds which are instrumental in yielding fruit (in this life) *i.e.* has appropriately distributed (them). *Yāthātathyataḥ*, being derived from *yathātathā*, means 'according to facts'. *śāśvatībhyaḥ*=permanent; *Samābhyaḥ i.e.* among Creators going by the name of 'Time'*

The first point taught here in Verse 1 is (exclusive) devotion to true knowledge after giving up desires of all kinds. The second point—taught in verse 2,—is that as this devotion to self-knowledge is not possible to the ignorant who seek to live (in the ordinary way) they should devote themselves to *karma*. The distinctness of the two courses referred to in these verses (belonging to the Suklayajurveda Samhitā) is also indicated in the Brhadāraṇyaka (which forms part of the Suklayajurveda Brāhmaṇa). (Thus we understand) from the passage beginning with "He desired, 'Let me have a wife' etc" (Bṛih. Up. I, iv, 17) that all *karma* is for the ignorant actuated by worldly desires. And the statement, (in the same passage) "To him the mind is the

* For this sense of *Samvatsara* see Bṛh. Up. I, v, 14 and Pr. Up. i. 9. Like everything else Time also is born of the Creator. Hence 'Time' is 'Creator' taking the effect for the cause.

Self; speech, wife; &c”¹ makes it clear that ignorance and covetousness characterise the person devoted to *karma*. Its result is accordingly the creation of the seven kinds of food and (thereafter) identifying with them oneself (and one’s interests)². Again, as opposed to adherence to *karma*, exclusive devotion to the Self, in its reality, through renunciation of the three kinds of desire for wife &c., is taught to knowers of the Self in the passage beginning with “What have we to do with offspring—we to whom this Self is the desired end (world)?” (Bṛh. Up. IV, iv, 22.)

In verses 3—8, by first showing, disparagement of the ignorant, the real nature of the Self has been explained to such as devote themselves, after renunciation, to Self-realisation; for it is the knowers and not the worldly-minded that are qualified for it (Self-realisation). The same has been distinctly stated in the Śvetāśvatara Upanishad (vi, 21)—“To those in the *highest religious stage*, he well explained the sacred truth followed by many sages” The following verses are (now) addressed to the worldly-minded who, devoting themselves to *karma*, desire to live a life

1. Beleiving mind to be the Self is an indication of nescience.

2. See Bṛh. Up. I, v, 1.

of activity. How is it to be known (that they are addressed to such alone) and not to all? The reply is—None but the deluded would associate with *karma* or with other kinds of knowledge, that knowledge of Self-unity, which arises from the destruction of all difference between end and means as taught to the unworldly in verse 7. In what follows the dispraise of the ignorant is with a view to associate *Karma* with *Vidyā*. (Hence we should understand that) only such (knowledge) is meant here as can, with reason or in accordance with *śāstra*, be combined with *karma*. That knowledge is knowledge of deities (*upāsana* or meditation), known as 'divine wealth' which is taught here as co-existent with *karma*, and not the knowledge of the supreme Self, for a specific result is known to follow (from a knowledge of deities) from the text— "The world of the gods through meditation" (Brh. Up. I, v, 16). The separate practice of meditation and *karma* is condemned here with a view to (inculcate their) simultaneous practice and not for altogether deprecating (either); for specific results are known (from the Veda) to follow from each. Compare—'That, They ascend through meditation'; 'The world of the gods through meditation' 'Those who take the southern path do not go there'; 'The world of the manes by *karma*'. Nothing that *śāstra* prescribes can possibly be blameworthy.—

9. Into blinding darkness pass they who adhere to *karma* and into still greater darkness, as it were, they who delight in meditation.

andham tamaḥ=blinding darkness. *praviṣ-anti*=(they pass). Who? *yé avidyām upāsate*=they who practise *karma*. *avidyā* is what is other than knowledge *i.e.* *karma*, because *karma* is opposed to knowledge. *upāsate*=devoutly practise *i.e.* perform only *karma* such as *agnihōtra*. *tataḥ i.e.* than such blinding darkness. *bhūya iva*=greater, as it were.¹ *tē tamaḥ i.e.* they pass into darkness. Who? *yé u*=those who, on the other hand; *vidyāyām*=in meditating on deities; *ratāḥ* take delight *i.e.* who engage themselves in it to the exclusion of *karma*.

Now follows a statement of the distinction between the respective fruits of meditation and *karma*, as an argument for their simultaneous practice. Otherwise, if of the two thus proximately stated, one only is known to bear fruit and not the other, the relation between them would be (according to rules of interpretation, not one of co-ordination but) only that of subordination²—

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1. I read *bahutaram iva*.
 2. I read *angāngitairva syāt*.

10. Distinct, they say, is (the fruit borne) by meditation and distinct again, they say, is (that borne) by *karma*. Thus have we heard from sages who taught us that.

anyat ēva=quite distinct. *Vidyayā*=(by meditation) *i.e.* the fruit borne by meditation is distinct. *āhuh*=they say; (the second *pāda*) means "*karma* yields a distinct fruit altogether"; as recorded in "The world of manes through *karma*; the world of gods through meditation". *iti*=thus. *śuṣṛuma*=we have heard. *dhīrāṇām* *i.e.* (the saying) of the wise. *yē*—*i.e.*, which teachers. *naḥ*=to us. *tat i.e. karma* and meditation. *vichachakshirē*=explained well. The purport is that this their teaching has been handed down by tradition,

Since it is so,

11. Whoever understands meditation and *karma* as going together, (he) overcoming death through *karma*, attains immortality through meditation.

The first *pāda* means 'meditating on deities and *karma*'. *yah*=(whoever.) *tat*=*etat*=this. *ubhayam*=(two.) *saha*—*i.e.* to be practised by the same person. *veda*=(understands). (The second half of the verse) states that only a person, practising both together, will in due course, achieve the chief end* *avidyayā*=by *karma* like *agnihôtra*. *mṛtyum*—by this word are here meant usual activity and knowledge. *tīrtvā*=having overcome those two. *vidyayā*=by meditation on deities. *amṛtam*=(immortality); godhead. *aṣnuté*=attains. Becoming one with the deity (meditated upon) is termed 'immortality' here.

Now with a view to inculcate their simultaneous practice, follows the condemnation of the separate meditation on the manifest and on the unmanifest—

12. Into blinding darkness pass they who are devoted to the unmanifest, and into still greater darkness, as it were, they who delight in the manifest

Sambhavanam means birth. That which is born and is an effect is *sambhūti*. *asambhūti* is

* I read *Samuchchayakāriṇa eva ekapurushārtha-sambandhaḥ*.

what is other than *sambhūti* i.e., *prakṛti*, the undifferentiated cause whose essence is nescience and which is the source of all activity and desire. They who devote themselves to such Cause enter (as may be expected) darkness which is correspondingly blind in its nature. *Sambhūtyām* i.e., in the phenomenal Brahman known as *Hiranyagarbha*. They who delight only in Him enter darkness which is, as it were, more blinding still.

Now follows as an argument for their simultaneous practice, a statement of the distinction between the respective fruits of the two kinds of meditation—

13. Distinct, they say, is (what results) from the manifest and distinct again, they say, is (what results) from the unmanifest. Thus have we heard from the sages who taught us that.

anyat eva = altogether distinct. *ākuḥ* = (they say). *Sambhavāt* = from that which has birth i.e., from meditating on the phenomenal Brahman, supernatural power such as assuming, at will, extreme subtlety is said to result. Similarly, they say that there is a (distinctive) fruit from meditat-

ing on the unmanifest,—viz, that, alluded to in *pāda* 1 of verse 12 and which is known as “absorption into primal cause”¹ to those versed in the Purāṇas. *iti*=thus. *ṣuṣṛuma dhīrāṇām*—i.e., we have heard the saying of the wise. The last *pāda* means “who explained to us the results of meditating on the manifest and the unmanifest”

Since this is so, it is but right that meditation on both the effect and the cause should be practised together; a further reason being the achievement (through such meditation) of the chief end.²

14. Whoever understands the manifest and the unmanifest as going together, (he), by overcoming death through the manifest, attains immortality through the unmanifest.

The first half of the verse means “He who understands that meditation on the manifest and the unmanifest should be practised together”. *vināṣa* here means an “effect”—that whose character is transitoriness; the abstract being put for the concrete. *vināṣēna* means “by meditating on

1. This state may be sought on account of the absence of the ordinary excitements of life in it as in sleep.

2. I read *yukta ēva* and *ekapurushārthatvāchcha*.

such (Brahman)". *mṛtyum* = death *i.e.*, all kinds of deficiency arising from limited power, demerit, covetousness and so on. *tīrtvá*=(having overcome); for great supernatural power is attained by the contemplation of Hiraṇyagarbha. Having thus overcome death or limitation of power &c., *asambhūtya i.e.*, by meditating on the unmanifest. *amṛtam i.e.* absorption into the First Cause. *aṣṇuté* (attains). It should be noted that *sambhūti* in the first *pāda* is mentioned without the (initial) *a* (and is to be taken as equivalent to *asambhūti*) agreeably to the statement that the result is absorption into the First Cause.

The result derivable, according to *śāstra*, through worldly and divine 'wealth'¹ extends up to absorption into the First Cause. Thus far is metempsychosis. Higher than that, is the realisation of the unity of Self spoken of in verse 9—the result of renouncing all desires and devoting oneself (exclusively) to true knowledge. Thus the two-fold teaching of the Veda, as relating to worldly activity and to withdrawal from it, has been explained here. And the (Śatapatha) Brāhmaṇa up to (the chapters on) Pravargya (purificatory ceremonies described in Khanda xiv

1. Worldly wealth or means comprising cattle, land, money &c., all required for performing *karma*. 'Divine wealth' is knowledge of deities.

chapters 1—3) concerns itself with elucidating, in full, the Vedic teaching relating to the path of activity, consisting of injunctions and prohibitions. The succeeding portion, viz., the Bṛhadâraṇyaka, explains the path of withdrawal from the world. In verse 11 it has been stated¹ that he who desires to live performing *karma* (in its entirety) from conception to death, and along with it, practises meditation on the lower (phenomenal) Brahman will attain immortality. It is now pointed out by what course, one so qualified becomes immortal. (We read in the Bṛh. Up. V, v, 2) "That is what is Truth; it is the Sun, the Person in this disc, as also the Person in the right eye". The worshipper of this two-fold Brahman—Truth—who has also been performing *karma* as prescribed, addresses thus, when the end is come, Brahman who is Truth, beseeching Him for entrance—

15. Truth's face is covered
with a golden lid : remove that,
O Pûshan, that I, Truth's
devotee, may see It.

Hiraṇmayam=seeming golden, resplendent
têna=by such. *pâtrêna*=lid, as it were. *satyasya i.e.*

1. taduktam iti, tam pratyuktam mantrêṇa vid-
yâmchâvidyâmchêtâyadinâ.—Ânandagiri. One Ms., reads
tampratyêtaduktam in place of taduktam.

of the Brahman residing in the Solar disc. *apihitam* = covered. *mukham* = entrance. *tat* = (that); *tvam* = (you); *hê pûshan* = O Sun, *apâvṛṇu* = remove. *satyadharmâya i.e.*, to me who am *satyadharmâ*, through meditation on you who are Truth. Or this expression may mean "one that practises true piety" *Dr̥shṭayê i.e.*, for reaching you whose essence is Truth.

16 O Pûshan, sole traveller,
Yama, Sun, child of Prajâpati,
recall thy rays ; withdraw thy
light that I may behold thee of
loveliest form. Whosoever that
Person is, that also am I.

Pûshan = the sun, so called because he protects the world. *Ekarshê*, because he traverses (the sky) alone. *Yama*, Death, because he controls all. *Sûrya*, because he sucks up rays, life and water. *Prâjâpatya*, because he is the son of Prajâpati, the Creator. *vyûha* = remove. *raṣmîṇ i.e.* your rays. *samûha* = unite i.e. withdraw. *têjas* = your light. *yat tê* = what is yours. *rûpam* = form, *kalyâṇatamam* = loveliest, *tat tê* = that of yours *paśyâmi i.e.* I may see by your grace. Further I am not entreating you as a servant, because whoever is the Person in the Solar disc, composed of

vyāhrtis,* the same am I. He is known as *purusha* (person) because He is of the form of a person, or because this world is full of Him in His modes of activity and thought or, again, because He lies in the citadel of the body.

17. (May) this life (merge in)
the immortal breath ! And (may)
this body end in ashes ! Om ! mind,
remember, remember thy deeds ;
mind, remember, remember thy
deeds !

Now that I am dying, may my life (*Vāyu*) abandoning the bodily adjunct assume the godly, in the immortal breath (*amṛtam anīlam*) of the universal Self, the 'connecting thread' of all. *pratipadyatām* ("may reach") is to be understood. The meaning, agreeably to the prayer for entrance, is "May this subtle body purified by meditation and *karma* advance". *atha*=(and). *īdam*=(this), *śarīram*=(body), *hutam*=(burnt) in fire. *bhāsmāntam* i.e., may it end in ashes. *Om*—thus is addressed Brahman—as identical with what is known as *Agni* the essence of

* *Vyāhrti* is literally 'utterance' and is the term used to denote the three sacred syllables *bhūh*, *bhuvah*, *svah*. See Brh. Up. V, v, 3.

Truth—following the mode of meditating on Him through this symbol. *kratô* i.e., O mind, so called because it desires. *smara* i.e., remember what has to be remembered, for the time for it is now come. Therefore remember what has till now been meditated upon. Remember also whatever *karma* you have done till now*—since boyhood. The repetition of the third *pāda* indicates earnestness.

By another verse also, entrance is prayed for—

18. O God Agni, lead us on to prosperity by a good path, judging all our deeds. Take away ugly sin from us. We shall say many prayers unto thee.

Agnê=(O Fire). *naya* = lead, *supathâ*=by a good path. This qualifying word excludes the southern path. (The devotee means)—“I am tired of the southern path characterised by birth and death, and therefore do I repeatedly ask you to lead (me) by the good path free from birth and death”. *râyê*=for wealth i.e. (here) for enjoying the fruit of *karma*. *asmân*=us, that are qualified for (the enjoyment of) the fruits of the prescribed practices. *viṣvāni*=all. *dēva*=O God,

* I read *agrê* in place of *agnê*.

vayunāni=*karma* or meditation. *vidvān*=knowing. Further, *yuyodhi* i.e., separate or destroy. *asmat*=*asmattaḥ*=from us. *juhurāṇam*=crooked or deceitful. *ēnaḥ*=sin; so that becoming pure thereby we may obtain our wish. We are not, however, able now to serve you actively (as of old); we can but do obeisance again and again (*bhūyishthām*) to you.

Some entertain a doubt (as regards the antithesis between *karma* and true knowledge) hearing the statements (contained in verses 11 and 14)—“Overcoming death through *avidyā*, he attains immortality through *vidyā*” and “Overcoming death through the manifest, he attains immortality through the unmanifest”. We shall therefore briefly consider (the matter now) in order to clear (this doubt.) Now then, what is the reason for the doubt? The answer is—Why should not true knowledge itself be understood by *vidyā* in the above passage? and also (by *amṛtatva* true) immortality? Well, are not this knowledge of the supreme Self and *karma* mutually exclusive on account of the antithesis between them? True; but this antagonism is not known (through *śāstra*) for antagonism or the reverse should be based on *śāstraic* authority only. Just as the performance of *karma* and the practice of *Vidyā* are known through *śāstra* alone, so also should their opposition or agreement be. As the

śāstraic prohibition “No creature should be hurt” is annulled by *śāstra* itself in “In a sacrifice animals may be killed” so also should it be in the case of *vidyā* and *avidyā* as well as in the case of knowledge and *karma*.¹

No; because the Veda says—“Distant are these.—opposed and leading in diverse ways—*karma* and knowledge” (Kaṭha Up. ii, 4). If it be said that owing to the statement in verse 11, there is (likewise) no antagonism between them, we reply ‘No’; because² there can possibly be no option as regards opposition or agreement between true knowledge and *avidyā*³. If it be rejoined that there is no antithesis

1. I omit *samuchchayaḥ* after *vidyākarmasāṅga*.

2. I omit *hetusvarūpaphalavirōdhāt*. I also put a full stop after *vikalpāsambhavāt*.

3. Option is conceivable in the case of *karma*. Thus one *śākha* of the Veda prescribes “*udite juhōti*”; another, “*anudite juhōti*.” Here it may be understood that the Veda gives one, option to offer oblations either after sunrise or before. But the same rule cannot apply to *vidyā* and *avidyā*, on the strength of the two texts in question. In this case, only one of the statements can hold good and the other, instead of being taken literally, has to be interpreted in such a manner that it will not clash with the first. Reason has to decide which statement is to be understood literally and which not.

at all, on the strength of the *injunction* (here in verse 11) regarding their combined practice, we repeat 'No'; for the two cannot conceivably co-exist.

If it be urged that *vidyā* and *avidyā* are to be pursued by the same (person) one after the other¹, we reply 'No'; for when true knowledge comes to a person, nescience is inconceivable in him. Thus (for instance) if once a man experiences heat and light in fire, there cannot arise in him the ignorance—that fire is cold or devoid of light. Nor can there be doubt or delusion (in a knower) for verse 7 denies all possibility of them. Nescience being inconceivable,—we have said—its result²—*karma*—is equally inconceivable. The immortality spoken of (here) is only relative. Further if *vidyā* in this

1. If it is meant that *karma* precedes knowledge, there is no difficulty in agreeing with the opponent, for it is recognised that *karma* prepares man for true knowledge. But if *karma* is to succeed knowledge, the statement of the opponent cannot be admitted.

2. The opponent may argue at this stage that the antithesis hitherto spoken of is between *vidyā* and *avidyā* and not between *karma* and *vidyā*. This argument is met by stating that dissociating *avidyā* from a knower is perforce dissociating *karma* also from him.

passage referred to knowledge of the supreme Self, praying for an entrance would be inappropriate.* Thus we conclude by stating that the meaning of the verses in question is, as we have explained.

* This is said in reference to the Vedic text. “*na tasya prāṇā utkrānti*” (Bṛh. Up. v, 6), which declares that final release is attained by a knower, where he is, and not by his going elsewhere.

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